

**COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE**  
**Inter-Office Communication**

**Date:** July 3, 2003

**To:** Finance and Audit Committee Members  
Scott Walker, County Executive

**From:** Bud Borja, Chief Information Officer, Department of Administrative Services  
Rick Ceschin, County Board Research Staff  
Jerome J. Heer, Director of Audits

**Subject:** Information Technology Council [File No. 02-503(a)]

**Background**

The following is a brief chronology of the Information Technology Council:

The 2001 Adopted Budget directed the Information Management Services Division (IMSD) to establish an Information Technology Council (IT Council).

In September 2001, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution [File No. 00-589(a)(g)], which authorized continuation of the Information Technology Council and established the following as the Council's mission:

- Communicate about information technology, standards and resource sharing.
- Address strategic planning, priority setting and staffing requirements.
- Consult with IMSD on the implementation of Audit recommendations.
- Recommend policies about purchasing efficiencies and the design and use of IT systems.
- Propose or authorize IT projects based on authorized appropriations, costs, benefits and the best interests of the County as a whole.

In July 2002, per the directive of the County Board of Supervisors and the County Executive, the Fiscal and Budget Administrator, Director of Audits and Director of County Board Research submitted a report regarding the potential creation of a new Department of Administrative Services.

The report included several recommendations for streamlining and improving administrative rules and procedures; including the following recommendations pertaining to Information Technology:

- Reorganize the Information Technology Council to consist primarily of departmental "business managers" to address high-level countywide IT priorities.
- Ensure that any future major IT project cannot go forward without consideration of internal process improvements.

In September 2002, the Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB) recommended that "Milwaukee County formalize the role of the Information Technology Council and specify its responsibilities in establishing countywide information technology standards."

The County Executive's 2003 Recommended Budget contained the following policy initiatives:

"The Department of Administrative Services, along with the Department of Audit and County Board staff, shall examine formalizing the role of the Information Technology Council and specify its responsibilities in establishing County-wide information technology standards and report back to the Finance and Audit Committee and the County Executive by February, 2003.

Also, as recommended in the report recommending creation of a Department of Administrative Services, the above departments shall examine reconstructing the Information Technology Council to consist primarily of departmental "business managers" to address high-level County-wide Information Technology priorities. Also, it shall be required that any future major information technology project cannot go forward without consideration of internal process improvements."

During its 2003 Budget deliberations, the Committee on Finance and Audit deleted many policy initiatives from the Recommended Budget and referred those items to the appropriate policy committee(s) of the County Board.

The aforementioned policy initiatives addressing the Information Technology Council and information technology policy were referred to the Committee on Finance and Audit.

On January 16, 2003 the Committee on Finance and Audit recommended adoption of the recommendations made by the LAB and County staff regarding the Information Technology Council and information technology policy.

Subsequently, the County Board directed the Department of Administrative Services, Department of Audit and County Board staff to examine formalizing the role of the Information Technology Council and specifying its responsibilities in establishing County-wide information technology standards, and examine reconstructing the Information Technology Council to consist primarily of departmental "business managers" to address high-level County-wide Information Technology priorities, and that no major Milwaukee County information technology project shall go forward without consideration by IMSD of internal process improvements.

## **Analysis**

Creation of the new Department of Administrative Services should result in enhanced coordination of information technology services in Milwaukee County government. However, the need for advice regarding major technology initiatives and business priorities still exists. Therefore, the work group believes that it would be valuable to reconstitute the IT Council as a Steering Committee. This Committee would assist IMSD in developing recommendations to the County Executive and the County Board of Supervisors. It would focus on prioritizing and guiding limited IT resources in a manner that best achieves the County's strategic goals. Given the strategic nature of the Steering Committee's charge, it would be comprised of individuals best suited to providing broad guidance rather than specific technical input. A proposed charter for the Committee is attached as Exhibit 1.

Departmental business managers would be more valuable in working with IMSD directly to prepare matters for Steering Committee review and to participate in the tactical phase of implementing projects. The business managers would provide input to IMSD on technical matters and department priorities through standard user groups sessions while the Steering Committee would be used to identify more broad IT priorities and strategies. Departmental administrators and business managers would also be intricately involved in ensuring that any IT project focus on internal business process improvements. Such review of business practices would involve analyzing opportunities for streamlining, consolidating, avoiding duplication and other potential efficiencies.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The workgroup has calculated that an Information Technology Steering Committee should be created to replace the existing IT Council and to help in guiding technology priorities and resources. The Committee would be comprised of departmental administrators and outside resources. The proper role of departmental business managers should be to assist in implementing technology projects. Implementation should include an assessment of the potential for internal business process improvements.

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## **Milwaukee County IT Steering Committee Charter**

### **A. Purpose**

An advisory body that looks at the prioritization, allocation and direction of limited IT resources, and overall funding in order to focus the application of technology on the county's strategic goals.

Provide guidance and recommendations to County Executive and County Board for approval.

### **B. Participants**

1. Milwaukee County Chief Information Officer (Chair)
2. Director, Department of Administrative Services
3. Director, Department of Health and Human Services
4. Director, Department of Aging
5. Director, Department of Public Works
6. A Director representing small departments (appointed by County Executive)
7. Milwaukee County Sheriff
8. Clerk of Circuit Court
9. State of Wisconsin Chief Information Officer
10. Faculty Member, Marquette /UW-Milwaukee (appointed by County Executive)
11. County Board Supervisor (appointed by County Board Chairman)

### **C. Oversight Process for IT Projects**

1. Council determines available funding
2. Business groups identify opportunities, quantify value and prepare Project Proposals
3. IMSD gathers cost estimates for each Project Proposal
4. IT Steering Committee advises the CIO on selection, scheduling and termination of projects
5. IT Steering Committee reviews and adjusts project plan at the beginning of each quarter
6. IT Steering Committee judges achievement of business value for completed projects

### **D. Procedure for the IT Steering Committee**

1. By one week before the meeting any sponsor with issues or recommended changes in current projects or processes (e.g.: resource allocations, milestones, service levels) sends those issues or change recommendations to the committee chair. Also by that date, any sponsor wishing to introduce a new project sends a Project Proposal, to the committee chair.
2. One week before the meeting, the committee chair sends to all members the agenda for the meeting and attaches the status of any follow-up activities from the previous meeting, a list of issues, recommended changes, and project proposals received from sponsors, and current IT resource allocations.

3. At the meeting the group discusses the status of any follow-up items and any issues submitted regarding current work, and decides on actions to remediate or reduce the risk or jeopardy of each.
4. The committee discusses the viability of any proposed changes in current resource allocations, milestones, service levels, etc., and makes a decision on each. The committee may also review the staffing levels of any or all projects and processes, without a change recommendation from the respective sponsors.
5. The committee discusses each project proposal and decides to fund it, defer it or close it. This discussion also addresses the availability of specific required resources and the impact of their loss to other projects or processes. If the decision is to recommend to the CIO proceeding with the project, the committee determines the level and timing of the funding, any other projects or processes that are to be canceled or deferred to provide resources, and the expected frequency of status reporting to the committee.
6. The committee identifies any specific follow-up activities for the next meeting and selects the next meeting date.
7. Within one week following the meeting the chair issues minutes of the meeting to all members and advisers.

## **E. Definition of Terms and Functional Details**

### **1. IT Resources Categories**

Information Technology resources are classified as processes, projects or fixed costs. Each process and project has a business objective and a sponsor. The equipment in place is generally subject to long-term lease and maintenance contracts that the IT Steering Committee should review periodically but are best treated as fixed costs during regular meetings. Regular meetings of the committee focus on IT Processes and IT Projects.

### **2. IT Processes**

IT processes, such as computer operations, help desk, or application maintenance, are predefined sets of activities performed on a regular basis or in response to a stimulus. Their business objective is defined in terms of expected service levels and deliverables. They are characterized by requiring specified quantities of resources per transaction to achieve a given level of service. Adding or eliminating processes, by modifying the expected levels of service, by adjusting the numbers of transactions to be handled, or by altering the processes themselves, can change funding levels for processes. Members of the Steering Committee are likely to sponsor maintenance processes for systems that apply to their areas of the business. The CIO sponsors IT infrastructure processes such as computer operations.

**3. Direction of Work within a Process**

The sponsor of a process, such as the maintenance of a family of systems, has an allocated resource level for that process, and is responsible for organizing, accepting and implementing the IT deliverables that produce optimal business value for the continuing investment. In most cases this prioritization and scheduling of maintenance and other routine IT work is performed by a separate steering committee for that family of systems. The sponsor of the maintenance process or the sponsor's delegate usually chairs that steering committee.

**4. IT Projects**

Each IT project, such as development or enhancement of a system or installation of hardware or software, is characterized by a life span starting with investment and concluding with reaping business benefits. Project benefits are defined in terms of the value produced by new business processes or by changes in existing business processes, which are made possible by the project. Members of the Steering Committee are likely to sponsor development or implementation projects for systems that apply to their areas of the business. The CIO sponsors projects to improve the IT infrastructure processes.

**5. Proposal of New Projects or Processes**

A sponsor proposes a project or process to the IT Steering Committee and periodically reports on its performance once it is approved. A proposal to the IT Steering Committee is submitted with a Project Proposal form. The sponsor should also propose a means of funding the process or project and should identify the specific business benefits to be gained and the champion who will make the changes in the business to ensure realization of the anticipated benefits.

**6. Audits**

Periodically, at the discretion of the Director of Audits, the Department of Audit may examine the various IT projects and processes to substantiate costs, benefits, milestones and issues, and to see that they match the expectations of the IT Steering Committee. These audits also assess the continued realization of business benefits associated with previous IT projects, and the relative business value delivered by the various maintenance processes. The audit findings and recommendations are delivered to the Finance and Audit Committee as well as the IT Steering Committee for use in future resource allocations.

**F. Meetings**

IT Steering Committee meetings will be held quarterly. The goal will be to complete the Committee's work in a two hour session.